



GOOD FRIDAY

Death is a doorway

Do not be distant, O Lord, lest I find this burden of loss too heavy, and shrink from the necessary experience of my grief.

Do not be distant, O Lord, lest I become so mired in yesterday's hurts, that I miss entirely the living gifts this day might hold.

Let me neither ignore my pain, pretending all is okay when it isn't, nor coddle and magnify my pain, so that I dull my capacity to experience all that remains good in this life.

For joy that denies sorrow is neither hard-won, nor true, nor eternal. It is not real joy at all. And sorrow that refuses to make space for the return of joy and hope, in the end becomes nothing more than a temple for the worship of my own woundedness.

So give me strength, O God, to feel this grief deeply, never to hide my heart from it. And give me also hope enough to remain open to surprising encounters with joy, as one on a woodland path might stumble suddenly into dapplings of golden light.

Amidst the pain that lades these days, give me courage, O Lord; courage to live them fully, to love and to allow myself to be loved, to remember, grieve, and honor what was, to live with thanksgiving in what is, and to invest in the hope of what will be.

Be at work gilding these long heartbreaks with the advent of new joys, good friendships, true fellowships, unexpected delights. Remind me again and again of your goodness, your presence, your promises.

For this is who we are: a people of The Promise—a people shaped in the image of the God whose very being generates all joy

LITURGY FOR
EMBRACING

Both Joy & Sorrow

FROM THE BOOK
EVERY MOMENT HOLY,
VOL 2: *DEATH, GRIEF,*
& *HOPE*
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DOUGLAS MCKELVEY

So we, your children, are also at liberty
to lament our losses, even as we
simultaneously rejoice in the hope
of their coming restoration.

Let me learn now, O Lord, to do this
as naturally as the inhale and exhale
of a single breath:

To breathe out sorrow,
to breathe in joy.

To breathe out lament,
to breathe in hope.

To breathe out pain,
to breathe in comfort.

To breathe out sorrow,
to breathe in joy.

In one hand I grasp the burden of my grief,
while with the other I reach
for the hope of grief's redemption.

And here, between the tension of the two,
between what was and what will be,
in the very *is* of now,
let my heart be surprised by, shaped by,
warmed by, remade by,
the same joy that forever wells within
and radiates from your heart, O God.

Amen.

The thief on the cross teaches us a profound lesson: *It is better to live with no personal merit in the eyes of the world but die knowing the full merit of Christ, than to live with the full merit of the world and die without knowing the merit of Christ.*

THERE IS A FOUNTAIN, William Cowper (1889)

VERSE 1:

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their
guilty stains
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
lose all their guilty stains

Verse 2:

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in His day;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away:
Washed all my sins away, Washed all my
sins away;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.

VERSE 3:

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose it's power

'Til all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more
Be saved to sin no more, be saved to sin
no more
'Til all the ransomed church of God be
saved to sin no more

VERSE 4:

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supplied
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I
die
Redeeming love has been my theme,
and shall be till I die
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I
die
Redeeming love has been my theme,
and shall be till I die

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READING

"It is a glorious phrase of the New Testament, that 'he led captivity captive.'

The very triumphs of His foes, it means, he used for their defeat. He compelled their dark achievements to sub-serve his end, not theirs.

They nailed him to the tree, not knowing that by that very act they were bringing the world to his feet.

They gave him a cross, not guessing that he would make it a throne.

They flung him outside the gates to die, not knowing that in that very moment they were lifting up all the gates of the universe, to let the King of Glory come in.

They thought to root out his doctrines, not understanding that they were implanting imperishably in the hearts of men the very name they intended to destroy.

They thought they had defeated God with His back to the wall, pinned and helpless and defeated: they did not know that it was God Himself who had tracked them down.

He did not conquer in spite of the dark mystery of evil. He conquered through it."

James Stewart (1896–1990) was a minister of the Church of Scotland.

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD, Robert Lowry (1876)

Verse 1

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Verse 2

For my pardon, this I see
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
For my cleansing, this I plea
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Chorus

Oh! Precious is the flow that makes me
white as snow!
No other fount I know, nothing but the
blood of Jesus!

Verse 3

This is all my hope and peace
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
This is all my righteousness
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Chorus

Oh! Precious is the flow that makes me
white as snow! No other fount I know,
nothing but the blood of Jesus!

Verse 4

Nothing can for sin atone
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
Not of good that I have done
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Chorus

Oh! Precious is the flow that makes me
white as snow!
No other fount I know, nothing but the
blood of Jesus!

Chorus

Oh! Precious is the flow that makes me
white as snow!
No other fount I know, nothing but the
blood of Jesus!

JOHN 18:1-19:42

JESUS IS BETRAYED [around 3:00 a.m. Friday]

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

JESUS ARRESTED AND TAKEN TO ANNAS [around 4:00 a.m.]

So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know

what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE [around 6:00 a.m.]

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.) Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

JESUS SENTENCED TO DEATH [around 7:00 a.m.]

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out

again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God." Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED [around 9:00 a.m.]

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

"They divided my clothes among themselves,

and for my clothing they cast lots.”

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS [around 3:00 p.m.]

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty.” A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

[around 4:00 p.m.] Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of his bones shall be broken.” And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”

[around 5:00 p.m.] After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

[Sabbath began at 6:00 p.m.]

REFLECT

The resurrection of Christ does not entitle Christians to a pain free or comfortable life. Instead the resurrection gives hope beyond our suffering and joy in the midst of it so that we who are in Christ are able to endure because we have a better possession, a better future, a better hope, and a better joy. Rather than robbing the Christian of his/ her hope, suffering and loss prove where his/ her hope is laid up. Death is the doorway to Christ's resurrection.

Philippians 3:7-11

*"But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ — the righteousness from God based on faith. **My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead.**"*

Death has come for most of us in some fashion over the last year and we who expend great effort trying to avoid death have been forced to reckon with our fragility.

But the Bible gives us a sweet gift called *lament* - which is to express deep sorrow, grief, or regret. Approximately 42 of the 150 psalms are expressions of lament, some personal, others corporate. Lament is the gift to help sufferers take hold of their sorrows and draw into deeper intimacy with God. We are instructed to grieve: over injustice, when we feel helpless or hopeless, when our hearts are broken, when we suffer loss, when God is dishonored, and when we have sinned. 2020 provided ample opportunity for the church to experience all of the above.

Where has death kissed your life? Where are you grieving? What have you lost? How does Paul's declaration in Philippians 3 serve us as we confront our loss? Where have you sinned in your response to loss?

Consider the following areas of potential loss and deny the tendency to suppress your pain. Acknowledge where you are hurt, sad, angry, confused, weary. Parents, ask your kids what has hurt them, confused them, made them angry or afraid over this last year.

Your Father cares for you and has given you language to grieve while worshipping. He invites us to press into his heart and care and to find grace for every loss.

Loss of life/ physical death

Loss of finances/ job

Loss of social structures

Loss of relationships/ changes due to various tensions

Loss of plans, hopes, expectations of what should have been

Loss of special events (graduation, prom, weddings, funerals, etc.)

Loss of trust (government, news, leadership, etc.)

Loss of normalcy

Loss of stability: financial, societal, mental health, family stresses

Loss of passion, faith, hope, joy...

Our true devotion is often revealed in our response to what we lose. Perhaps unbelief has set in. Perhaps some of your responses to loss have been sinful. Jesus came to atone for every misplaced hope and every sinful response. He came to give us so great a treasure that we would gladly consider everything else a loss, if only we might gain him. His resurrected life sprouts forth in the ashes of loss.

Rejoice that your sins have been forgiven, you have been pardoned, and you are reconciled to God. His wrath is absorbed and there is nothing left to achieve or repay.

Is he worthy of your suffering? Your grief? Your disappointment? Will you entrust your sorrow and disappointment to the goodness of God's sovereignty?

"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:19-20).

"Grace to you and peace from God" in Christ.

RESPOND

As an expression of faith and submission, use the card you received when you arrived to write down a few of the key areas that came to mind as you thought about the last year. Write them as an act of *lament*, acknowledging the loss and whatever emotions accompanied that loss. If sinful responses or attitudes were revealed, write those as an act of *confession*, acknowledging sin and taking it to Christ who nailed it to the cross and freed you from your indebtedness.

(Parents help your kids through this exercise and consider doing it as a family.)

If you are comfortable doing so, take your card up to the threshold of the door near the front as an act of *submission* and *faith*. You are saying, "Father, this pain is real and I trust that you care about me. I trust that you will use this loss to conform me to Christ's likeness and it will be for my good and your glory. I entrust it to you." Cast your cares on Christ, for he cares for you.

· L A M E N T

· C O N F E S S

· S U B M I T

"DEATH REVEALS THE UTTER VANITY OF ALL OUR MISPLACED
WORSHIP AND ALL OUR FEEBLY-INVESTED HOPES."
// DOUGLAS MCKELVEY

IS HE WORTHY?

Verse 1

Do you feel the world is broken? (We do)

Do you feel the shadows deepen? (We do)

But do you know that all the dark won't stop

The light from getting through? (We do)

Do you wish that you could see it all made new? (We do)

Verse 2

Is all creation groaning? (It is)

Is a new creation coming? (It is)

Is the glory of the Lord to be

The light within our midst? (It is)

Is it good that we remind ourselves of this? (It is)

Chorus

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?

Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?

The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave

He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave

Is He worthy? Is He worthy

Of all blessing and honor and glory?

Is He worthy of this? He is!

Verse 3

Does the Father truly love us? (He does)

Does the Spirit move among us? (He does)

And does Jesus, our Messiah hold forever those He loves? (He does)

Does our God intend to dwell again with us? (He does)

Chorus

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?

Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?

The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave

He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave

From every people and tribe, every nation and tongue

He has made us a kingdom and priests to God

To reign with the Son

Is He worthy? Is He worthy?

Of all blessing and honor and glory

Is He worthy? Is He worthy?

Is He worthy of this? He is!

Is He worthy? Is He worthy?

He is!

He is!

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I WILL TRUST MY SAVIOUR JESUS

Verse 1

I will trust my Saviour Jesus
When my darkest doubts befall
Trust him when to simply trust him
Seems the hardest thing of all

Verse 2

I can trust my Saviour Jesus
Trust him when my strength is small
For I know the shield of Jesus
Is the safest place of all

Chorus

Jesus only Jesus
Help me trust you more and more
Jesus only Jesus
May my heart be ever yours

Verse 3

I will trust my Saviour Jesus
He has said his way is best
For I know the path he's chosen
Leads to everlasting rest

Chorus (2x)

Jesus only Jesus
Help me trust you more and more

Jesus only Jesus

May my heart be ever yours

Bridge (2x)

Oh on the cross how it was seen
I can go now ever trusting
In the one who died for me
What can I bring for your gift is complete
So I trust you simply trust you Lord
With every part of me

Chorus (2x)

Jesus only Jesus
Help me trust you more and more
Jesus only Jesus
May my heart be ever yours

Verse 4

I will trust my Saviour Jesus,
Every hour of my life
As I journey home to see him
He will never leave my side

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Children of the Living God,

Let us now speak of dying,
and let us speak without fear,
for we have already died with Christ,
and our lives are not our own.

Our dying is part of the story
that God is telling to us,
and part of the story
that God is telling *through* us.

It is not a dark and hopeless word
we must take pains to skirt or
mention only in hushed whispers lest
our conversations grow awkward
and uncomfortable.

Rather, death is a present and
unavoidable reality, and one
through which we—the people
of God—must learn to openly
walk with one another.

Yes, it is cause for lament. Death is
a horrible and inevitable sorrow.
It is grief. It is numb shock and
raw pain and long seasons of
weeping and ache. And we will
experience it as such.
But it is more than all of that.

For it is also a baptism,
a prelude to a celebration.

Our true belief that Christ died
and was raised again
promises this great hope:

AN EXHORTATION
MAKING SPACE

To Speak of Dying

EVERY MOMENT HOLY, VOL. II:

DEATH, GRIEF, & HOPE

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DOUGLAS MCKELVEY

That there will be a newness of life,
a magnificent resurrection that
follows death and swallows it entirely.

Death will not have the final word,
so we need not fear to speak of it.

Death is not a period that ends a sentence.
It is but a comma,
a brief pause before the fuller thought
unfolds into eternal life.

Beloved of Christ, do not
hide from this truth: Each of
us in time must wrestle death.
In our youth we might have run
in fear from such lament, but only
those who soberly consider their
mortal end can then work backward
from their certain death, and so begin
to build a life invested in eternal things.
We should remember death throughout
our lives, that we might arrive at last
well-prepared to follow our Lord
into that valley, and through it,
further still, to our resurrection.

Death is not the end of life.
It is an intersection—a milestone
we pass in our eternal pursuit of Christ.

Yes, death is an inhuman, hungry thing.
But it is also the pompous antagonist in a
divine comedy. Even as it seeks to destroy
all that is good, death is proved a near-sighted
buffoon whose overreaching plans will fail,
whose ephemeral kingdom will crumble.

For all along, death has been blindly serving
the deeper purposes of God within us—

giving us the knowledge that
all we gather in this short life will soon
be scattered, that all we covet will soon
be lost to us, that all we accomplish by
our ambition will soon be rendered as
meaningless as vapor.

Death reveals the utter vanity of all our
misplaced worship and all our feebly-
invested hopes.

And once we've seen, in light of death,
how meaningless all our human strivings
have been, then we can finally apprehend
what the radical hope of a bodily resurrection
means for mortals like us—and how
the labors of Christ now reshape
and reinterpret every facet of our lives,
rebuilding the structures of our hopes
till we know that nothing of eternal worth
will ever be lost.

Yes, we are crucified with our Lord,
but all who are baptized into his death
are also resurrected into his life, so that
we live now in the overlap of the kingdoms
of temporal death and eternal life—

and when it is our time to die,
we die in that overlap as well,
and there we will find that our dying has
already been subverted, rewritten, folded in,
and made a part of our resurrection.

Have we not all along been
rehearsing Christ's death and
his life in the sacrament of his
communion? We have been both
remembering and rehearsing
our union and reunion with him.

O children of God, do you now see?
Your pursuit of Christ has always
demanded a daily dying to your own self,
and to your own dreams.

That final, brief sleep of death is but the last
laying down of all those lesser things, that
you might awake remade, set free, rejoicing
in the glorious freedom that will be yours.

Yes, hate death!

It is an enemy—
but an enemy whose end approaches, and
whose assault can inflict no lasting wound.

Yes, weep and grieve!

But more than that, believe!
The veil is thinner than we know.
And death is thinner still.
It cannot hold any whose names are
dearly known to God. Rejoice in this!
Death is neither a grey void, nor
a dungeon cell—but a door.
And when Christ bids us
pass through at last,
we pass from life to Life.

Amen.